

**Garden Oaks Elementary Parent and Student Handbook 2009-10**

*“A place where children flourish!”*

**Lindsey Pollock, Principal**

**Moses Diaz, Assistant Principal**

**Houston Independent School District**



**Creating a College-Bound Culture**

**This handbook is intended to serve as a guide to our school. It is to be used in conjunction with the HISD Code of Student Conduct and the policies of the HISD Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency.**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of Garden Oaks Elementary school is to ensure success for all students by providing a positive, rigorous and creative learning community.

The vision is to create an “Exemplary School” environment with high expectations for all students with the latest in technological advancement.

*It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, race, religion, sex, veteran status, or political affiliation in its educational or employment programs and activities.*

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## *School Colors* **Green and Yellow**

*Mascot*  
Eagle

*Motto*  
Soaring High!

## *Garden Oaks School Creed*

I am a success!  
I believe in myself and my ability to do my best.  
I am positive, confident and kind to others.  
I am in control at all times and  
Take responsibility for my actions.  
I have the courage to endure and persist.  
I know I can succeed at school and in my community.  
I am a Garden Oaks success!

## *Campus Focus*

Environmental Sciences

## **2009-10 School Theme**

Peace



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## GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

### Academics

Every student will:

- Demonstrate proficiency in all academic subjects.
- Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication.
- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a technological society.
- Develop skills for life-long learning.

### Citizenship

Every student will:

- Demonstrate regular attendance including arriving on-time every day.
- Exhibit positive social behavior and abide by the rules set forth in the HISD *Code of Student Conduct*.
- Develop short and long range career and educational goals including high school graduation and college completion.
- Develop proficiency in practical and technical skills relating to technology.
- Demonstrate awareness of environmental issues such as recycling and sustainability including participation in campus initiatives.
- Demonstrate civic responsibility for functioning in a multi-cultural society including participation in community service projects.
- Demonstrate an awareness of health-related issues including healthy eating habits and the valued of physical fitness.
- Demonstrate responsibility for completion of homework and class work.

### Parental Responsibilities

Every parent or guardian will:

- Ensure their child arrives to school every day on time.
- Support their child in completing assignments and projects.
- Support their child in maintaining appropriate school behavior in the classroom, on the campus and at all school-sponsored activities and events.
- Encourage their child to complete high school and attend college.
- Attend school sponsored events and support school organizations such as the PTA Eagle Pals and Friends of Montessori.
- Notify the school immediately of all telephone and address changes.

***Classroom teachers will provide parent-teacher compacts outlining the unique relationships and responsibilities for each grade level. Please review carefully with your child and return the signed copy to the teacher.***

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## DAILY SCHEDULE

*ALL Programs Grades PreK3 through 6*

- 7:15 am Campus Opens and Breakfast Program Begins
- 7:45 am **Breakfast** Program Ends
- 7:50 am Students enter classroom
- 8:00 am Daily Announcements (*students entering classroom after 8am are marked tardy*)
- 9:30 am Official attendance is submitted
- 3:00 pm Dismissal (PK students begin at 2:55pm)

**School supervision of students begins at 7:15 am** Parents are responsible for their child's safety until appropriate faculty and staff is on duty at 7:15 am. All children must report directly to the cafeteria if they arrive before 7:50 am. Parents who enter the campus in the morning must sign-in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge, per HISD policy. *Please help us keep all of our children safe.*

School is over at 3:00 pm. Students must be picked up on time. Should you need after-school care for your child(ren), the YMCA after-school program is available on campus for an extra fee.

## SAFETY

*“Safety above all else”*

The safety of our students is a major concern of parents and school staff. The goal of the Houston Independent School District is, *safety above all else*. Our rules for bicycle riders, walkers and drivers are of primary importance for maintaining an accident free school environment for everyone. We urge you to talk to your child about safety to and from school, including avoiding strangers, and going directly home unless previous plans have been made.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up of Students**

Help us ensure the safety of our children by adhering to the following rules:

- **Parents are encouraged to drop-off and pick-up students in the front circle driveway.** Each car is issued a car tag with the teacher's name and a student number at the beginning of the school year. This number will be called when you arrive to pick up your child. Hang your tag on your rear-view mirror with the number facing out so the staff can clearly see the teacher name and number. **Teach your children to listen for their number each day.** Cars are strictly limited to the left lane. Day care buses and HISD school buses use the right lane. *You must remain in your vehicle at all times.*
- Parents of PreK and Kindergarten children are asked to line up at 2:45 pm so the younger children can be loaded into their cars first. Parents of children in grades 1-6 should get in the carpool line at 3:00 pm. If you have both younger and older children, please be in line at 3:00 pm so the flow of traffic can keep moving.
- **There is NO parking in the circle drive at any time.** The entire drive is a fire lane and you may be ticketed and/or towed. *You must remain with your vehicle at all times.*
- Right turns ONLY when entering or leaving the circle drive.

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### Rules for Drivers:

- Please be patient and observant. Children sometimes forget that driveways and streets are for cars. No appointment or deadline is more important than a child's safety.
- Drop off and pick-up children in approved areas only.
- Abide by the seatbelt and car seat laws for the passengers in your vehicle.
- Observe all parking signs and traffic cone placement around the school and in the neighborhood. Running in to school briefly does not exempt you from the information on these signs or city ordinances.
- Use the streets outside the school to park. Please keep driveways and sidewalks clear on Sue Barnett and all of the surrounding streets. Place yourself in the shoes of our neighbors and remember that you are parking in front of people's homes. Be considerate. Police officers do patrol the area and issue parking tickets when violations are spotted.
- The Faculty Parking Lot is off limits. Access to this lot is controlled by the electronic gate and is limited to HISD faculty, staff and authorized designees.  
**Enter the campus through the front gates only.**

### Rules for Walkers:

- Walk at all times.
- Cross Sue Barnett *only* where the Crossing Guards are on duty.
- Respect neighborhood property. Be a good neighbor.
- Walk on sidewalks.
- Do not talk to strangers – do not accept rides with strangers.
- Stay away from animals.
- Always follow the planned, direct route to your destination.

### Rules for Bicycle Riders:

- City ordinance requires all students to wear a helmet.
- Register your bicycle with the Houston Fire Department (call or go by your local fire station).
- One person may ride a bicycle at a time unless a child seat is attached.
- You are responsible for your bicycle. Do not lend it to someone else or allow them to ride your bicycle.
- Walk your bicycle on school property. You become a walker when you enter school grounds in order to ensure the safety of everyone around you.
- Park and lock your bicycle in the bike rack. (Anyone riding a bicycle to school must have a lock. Students may not lock bicycles together.)
- Always follow the planned, direct route to your destination.

Classes *begin* each day at 8:00 a.m. Plan your schedule to ensure plenty of time to allow for traffic and time to walk from the car to the classroom. This is a perfect time to start your child on a life-long habit of arriving to appointments on time. If your child is tardy to school, she/he must sign in at the main office and receive a pass to enter the classroom. Teachers may not admit students after the 8:00 a.m. tardy bell without a

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permit. Support your child and the teachers by arriving on time. **Children will not be admitted to class late without a permit. There will be no exceptions.**

### **SECURITY**

Garden Oaks Elementary is an open campus. Therefore it is vitally important that everyone including students, teachers, staff members, parents and visitors abide by district procedures and remain observant. **All** visitors (individuals not employed at the campus are considered visitors including the Superintendent of Schools!) **are required to enter the front office and sign-in when arriving on the campus.** Visitors will be asked as to the nature of their visit and issued a visitor badge. Parents are encouraged to register in the front office by presenting a government issued ID. A campus visitor badge will then be issued. Sign-in is still required each time you enter the campus.

Help us keep our campus safe and immediately report any person, vehicle or situation that is out of the ordinary including individuals on campus who are not wearing a visitor badge. Parents are asked to be mindful of appearance when on campus. Clothing containing sexual messages or obscenities is not allowed on the campus.

An emergency call out system is in place and may be used to notify parents of situations before, during or after school hours. The system is only effective if we have current telephone numbers on file. It is the parent's responsibility to keep all telephone numbers, addresses and pick-up information updated in the school office.

### **A Plan for Every Child Every Day**

Children need the security of knowing exactly what to do when the school day ends. Be sure to remind them of the plan for them to go home each afternoon and with whom. A message can be relayed to a child through the school office if a family emergency arises. Children will not be called to the office to answer the phone for any reason. Children are not permitted to leave school once they arrived and are discouraged from using the school phone except in an emergency. Parents must do all they can to help children remember everything they need each day – homework, library books, lunch or lunch money, books, money for field trips, signed notes and signed communication folders, etc.

### **Fire Drills**

Monthly fire drills, semi-annual disaster and intruder drills are conducted to maintain our awareness of emergency situations that may arise.

### **Inclement Weather and Other Emergencies**

Should weather conditions or other emergencies create a need for early school closure, the principal will activate the emergency telephone call out system. This system will notify parents via telephone and email, if on file, of the emergency conditions and the action that will be taken. Help us keep the phone lines clear in such an event by checking the Houston ISD website for emergency information at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org).

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## **Shelter in Place**

In case the school is instructed to shelter in place by emergency personnel, no one will be permitted to enter the campus to pick-up children until an all clear has been announced by fire or police departments.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Student attendance is taken daily at 9:30am. Students must be at school in order to be counted present. Attendance is a vital part of your child's education! Plan to have your child at school every day. We have set our goal for our attendance at Garden Oaks Elementary at 98%. Research shows that student attendance directly affects student outcomes. Additionally, funding for our school is based on student attendance.

### **Compulsory School Attendance Laws**

*To parents or to persons standing in parental relation to children*

This section is to inform you of Senate Bill 1432 as passed by the Texas Legislature effective September 1, 2001. The law states that if a student is absent from school three (3) days or parts of days in a four week-period without parental consent or is absent without an excuse for ten (10) or more days or parts of a day in a six month period:

- The student's parent or legal guardian is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code 25.093
- The student is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code 25.094

It is the parents' duty to monitor your child's attendance, require your child to attend school and request a conference with a school official to discuss absences. Parents or legal guardians are subject to prosecutions under Texas Education Code 25.093(b) for failure to require the child to attend school.

***Once enrolled in a Texas public school, all children are subject to the compulsory school attendance laws.*** Note: Excessive absences have resulted in parents at Garden Oaks Elementary being fined up to \$500 a day by the Court. We are required by law to report excessive absences.

Should a family emergency arise necessitating a leave from school contact the school's registrar. ***Family vacations must be planned around the school schedule as no credit for time away may be granted for such arrangements.***

## **Tardy Policy**

School begins promptly at 8:00am each day. Students are considered tardy at the 8:00 bell. School officials understand that *occasionally* traffic or weather may cause a student to be late. However, persistent tardiness is unacceptable. According to the *HISD Code of Student Conduct*, it is the parent's and student's responsibility to arrive on time each day. Students on transfer may jeopardize renewal of the transfer if persistent

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tardiness is an issue. A student must present a written note within three days of being tardy in order for the tardy to be considered excused.

### **Perfect Attendance Incentives/Requirements**

Various attendance incentives may be offered to recognize student efforts during the school year. These include, but are not limited to stickers, ribbons, pencils and drawings. The school posts class photos of students with Perfect Attendance at the end of each grading period. Students must have 3 or less tardies to be included.

PTA Eagle Pals supports the school's efforts through their recognition system which provides a Friday “goodie” coupon for students who have been present every day during the current month with **no tardies**.

Students will be awarded a trophy at the end of the year during grade level Awards Day programs. Requirements for a trophy include:

- Attendance records will begin on August 31, 2009 – the Monday of the second week of school
- Only students enrolled at Garden Oaks Elementary School during both the fall and spring semesters are eligible to participate for the trophy award.
- A student is disqualified for the trophy award if they are absent or tardy more than 3 times.
- Fifth grade students who have a record of perfect attendance for all years of elementary will receive a special recognition trophy at their grade level Awards Day program.

### **Excused Absences**

If your child is absent, please call the school before 10:00 a.m. on that day to notify the school. Then, send a note to the teacher the day after the absence stating the reason for the absence, the date, and your signature. Notes received after three days will automatically be considered unexcused. Excessive absences can result in an automatic retention for your child.

The only acceptable excuses for tardies and absences are

- Personal illness;
- Dental or doctor appointments (note required from physician)
- Death in the family;
- Quarantine;
- Weather or road conditions making travel dangerous;
- Emergencies or any unusual circumstances recognized by the principal;
- Observance of religious holy days;
- Health services provided to Medicare-eligible students
- School sponsored or school sanctioned activities away from the campus;
- Suspensions;
- Competitive athletic event duly sanctioned by the national governing body for a sport as recognized by the U.S. Olympic Committee.

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## **Unexcused Absences**

A student is considered to have an unexcused absence if he/she does not present a written excuse within three (3) days for one of the reasons stated in **Excused Absences**. Absences that extend weekends or approved school vacation days or for the purpose of taking family trips are not excused.

Unexcused absences may be reviewed by the School Attendance Committee in determining whether or not to grant a student credit for a class in which the student failed to meet the attendance requirement but who met all other academic requirements for passing. Summer school is required for students who exceed allowed absences.

Schools shall attempt to notify parents/guardians of all absences immediately. The school's call-out system is activated daily for this purpose. All absences are subject to investigation by the district's attendance officer assigned to Garden Oaks Elementary. Unexcused absences may not be made up.

## **Release of Students Before Regular Dismissal**

Children are not permitted to leave school after they arrive except for specific instances. If a student needs to leave during the school day for an appointment or due to illness, he/she must be signed out by his/her legal guardian. The parent must come into the office to sign the child out from school. Only the parent who has completed the enrollment form or who is indicated on the enrollment card will be allowed to take a child from school during regular school hours. A government issued form of identification is required at time of check out. No student will be allowed to leave at any time with an adult whose name is not on the enrollment card. When possible, the classroom teacher should receive a note in the morning if the student is to leave before the regular time for a doctor's appointment so the teacher can plan accordingly. Teachers are not able to answer the phone or check emails during the school day as they are busy with instruction!

In the case of an extreme emergency, if you need someone else to pick up your child, notify the office. You may need to send a fax indicating your authorization. The fax number at the school is (713) 696-2932. Be sure to call once you have sent the fax to verify that the school is in receipt of the fax.

Please do not try to pick up your child before the dismissal bell. Students will not be released between 2:30pm and 3:00pm. The school day ends at 3:00 p.m. and the teachers are busy teaching and getting information to the students at the end of the day. The safety of the children is our top priority.

If there is custody agreement be sure to provide the school with the most recent court order ***with a judge's signature***. Schools may call law enforcement personnel should an issue arise regarding student safety and security.

## **STUDENTS WHO BECOME ILL AT SCHOOL VISITATIONS TO THE NURSE**

The school nurse will contact parents to pick up all students who have temperature elevations or who have committed. **Students will not be permitted back to class until these symptoms have cleared for 24 hours.** Special provisions regarding the H1N1 virus may apply to students with confirmed cases. If parents cannot be contacted, a relative or emergency contact person listed on the enrollment form will be called and asked to pick up the child. Parents are expected to keep their contact information current.

Teachers will refer children who appear ill or complain of sickness to the school nurse. It is the nurse's professional decision to contact parents. The nurse is not expected, nor will she, contact parents every time their child is sent to the clinic. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the nurse informed of all medical conditions related to their child's health including if the child takes medications at home.

Children sent home with head lice must be nit-free when returning to school. The nurse must check the child before they are allowed to return to class.

### **Medications**

HISD Board Policy states that it is not the function of public school personnel to administer medical treatment or medication, including over-the-counter drugs. *Long-term student medications*, which cannot be administered under any arrangement other than during school hours, may be taken at school only with a physician's written statement and completion of Form No. 40.3740. All medication will be maintained locked in the clinic and administered by the school nurse or designee. Please ask the school nurse for a copy of the form. Medications must be in the original pharmacy container and have the name of the child for which the medication is intended on the bottle. Medications must be delivered to the school by an adult.

Teachers and other school personnel are expected to limit themselves to the usual and accepted practices of first aid in managing emergencies due to sickness or accident. Should it be necessary to call an ambulance to the school, all efforts will be made to contact the parent will be immediately.

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## UNIFORM DRESS CODE

ALL Garden Oaks students are required to wear uniforms each day including field trips and special events. Occasionally, non-uniform days will be announced. Please refer to the monthly school calendar or website. The principal or administrative designee has final authority for dress code decisions.

### Shirts and Sweaters:

- Solid color white, navy blue or red polo style shirts either short or long sleeve
- Approved Garden Oaks t-shirts
- Boy Scout or Girl Scout uniforms
- Jackets, sweaters or sweatshirts that are worn during class time must be solid colors and comply with the school colors. Hoods must remain down at all times.

### Pants, Skirts, Shorts, Sweaters and Sweatshirts:

- **Khaki** solid colored pants, walking shorts, skirts, skorts, or jumpers
- Pants, shirts and shorts must fit properly around the waist
- Skirts or jumpers must be traditional design and many not be more than 3 inches above the knee with no splits or slits
- Pants must be straight-leg style with cuffs or straight hemmed and rest at the top of the shoe
- Shorts must be worn at the knee or no more than 3 inches above the knee
- Any oversized, undersized, torn, cut at the seam or frayed pants are not permitted. All clothing must fit appropriately.

### Shoes and Socks

- Closed-toe shoes are to be worn at all times. These shoes may be leather or sneaker style
- Socks are worn with all shoes
- For safety reasons, platform shoes, spiked heels, combat or cowboy boots, steel-toed boots or any backless shoes including clogs, house shoes, sandals, open-toed shoes, flip-flops or water socks are not permitted.

### Additional Dress and Grooming Regulations

- Students should be clean and wear clean clothes
- Clothing items, including jewelry, which distracts from the educational process is not allowed. This includes anything depicting the occult, gang membership, death, suicide, skulls, violence, drugs, sex, race, gender, obscenities, alcohol, items with double meanings or anything else deemed inappropriate.
- Hairstyles should be reasonable and clean. No designs may be cut into the hair.
- Hair colors, other than natural shades are not permitted.
- Headwear (hats, caps, bandannas, etc) are not permitted.
- No body piercing is allowed, except earrings. All earrings must be “stud” type. No loops or dangle types are allowed. This policy applies to girls and boys.
- Keys may not be worn around the neck or on a belt loop.
- Make-up is not to be worn or brought to school.
- Temporary tattoos must be school appropriate and are highly discouraged.

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### **Disciplinary Consequences for Dress Code Violations**

- First Offense – Parent is contacted by telephone to bring appropriate clothing to school or take the child home to change.
- Second Offense – Parent is contacted by telephone to bring appropriate clothing to school or take the child home to change. Student assigned 1 day after-school detention.
- Third Offense - Parent is contacted by telephone to bring appropriate clothing to school or take the child home to change. Student assigned Saturday morning detention.
- Subsequent Violations – Parent is contacted by telephone to bring appropriate clothing to school or take the child home to change. Further disciplinary action for persistent disregard of campus policy will apply per *HISD Code of Student Conduct*.

Plan to support your child in adhering to the campus policy. Forgetting to do laundry is not an acceptable excuse to be out of uniform. A limited number of uniforms are available in the office should a child have an accident at school. Loaner uniforms should be returned to the school clean as soon as possible. PK and Kinder students are required to bring a change of clothes to school in case of accident. Should you need assistance purchasing uniforms please contact the school for referral to appropriate social service agencies.

### **CLASSROOM VISITATION**

Parents wishing to observe their child in class are invited to do so with advance notice. Arrangements must be made 24 hours in advance prior to your visit with the classroom teacher or campus administrator. Parents may only visit classrooms and programs in which their child is enrolled. To avoid disruption of the educational process, visits shall be restricted to 30 minutes. Parents of children enrolled in the Montessori Program must observe in the classroom once each semester as a condition of enrollment in the program. No visitors are allowed on campus during TAKS administrations. The principal reserves the right to deny any visitation that may disrupt the educational process.

### **REQUESTING A PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE**

Parents may request a parent-teacher conference to discuss concerns or suggestions. Teachers are available before school, during their planning period and after school. Parents must make appointments 24 hours in advance and wait for teacher confirmation. **Always sign in at the main office and receive a visitor's pass.** Teachers will ask you to go to the office and get one if you do not have one when you arrive at her/his door. Parents who arrive during the day and ask us to disrupt the class to talk to the teacher will be turned away. The educational milieu of the classroom during the school day is not to be interrupted.

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### FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be arranged by the teacher as an outgrowth of the school curriculum and instruction. For any field trip, parent approval forms will be sent home to be signed and returned. No student will be permitted to attend a trip without written permission on the appropriate form. This signed permission form and all monies due must be returned to the teacher by this indicated deadline. **We reserve the right to deny a child's participation in a field trip or in co-curricular activities if the conduct (P or U) at school does not merit this privilege.** A parent may be required to accompany their child on the field trip if the teacher has concerns regarding the student's ability to stay with the group. Children represent the school while on field trips. Therefore their appearance and conduct should be exemplary. School uniforms are required for field trips.

#### **Chaperones for Field Trips**

Assisting teachers with field trips is an integral part of our volunteer program. Adequate adult supervision makes for a pleasant learning experience for all students. Adults must ride school buses and pay applicable bus and admission fees as required. Parents may NOT drive personal vehicles to field trips. Parents may not “show up” at a field location. Appropriate attire must be worn that is conducive to a school setting. Parents may not bring siblings or other family members or friends on field trips. The principal reserves the right to limit the number of chaperones or deny certain individuals from acting as chaperones.

All chaperones must complete HISD Volunteers in Public Schools registration and background check prior to any field trip according to district policies. You must go online and register. Additionally you must present a copy of your government issued ID to the front office where a copy will be made and placed on file. Allow 3 – 6 weeks for the approval process. It is recommended you do this at the beginning of the school year. Take time to update your volunteer profile and be sure to sign in each time you come to school to volunteer!

*The school reserves the right to deny a parent participation in the activity if it has a concern about the individual's ability to participate on the day of the event.*

#### **Report Cards**

Report Cards will be given to students at the end of the day on Report Card Day. The dates will be sent home in the principal's newsletter, and the school calendar. Be sure to ask your children for their report cards. They must be signed and returned to the teacher so that she/he will know that you have seen your child's grade.

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### **AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Garden Oaks Elementary School has a partnership with the Northwest YMCA to provide a childcare and enrichment program each day after school. Hours are from school dismissal time until 6:00 p.m. The first 45 minutes of the program is dedicated to homework help and educational activities. School uniforms are required. Snacks are provided. Enrollment is taken at the YMCA on 34<sup>th</sup> Street (713) 869 – 3378. Flyers are available in the front office.

### **SHARED DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE**

The Garden Oaks Shared Decision Making Committee (SDMC) is comprised of members of the faculty and community. It provides suggestions regarding problems and concerns that directly affect reaching the goals and objectives in our School Improvement Plan (SIP). Input forms can be found in the main office and at the school website along with copies of the minutes of each meeting. You do not have to be a member of the SDMC to attend any monthly meeting. All stakeholders in our school – parents, teachers, community members, etc. are welcome to attend all meetings. Only elected members of the SDMC may vote on issues before the committee. Input from all stakeholders is greatly valued. **The SDMC meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm.**

### **FAMILIES COUNT**

We are fortunate to work in collaboration with Families Count!, a division of DePelchin Children's Center. This organization sponsors many programs for parents, including nutrition classes, parenting classes, an ADHD Support Group, Parents Anonymous, as well as assists families in need of referral to support services. Talk to a school administrator for more information. Brochures are available in the front office.

### **KIDS HOPE MENTORING PROGRAM**

Garden Oaks Elementary works together with St. Rose of Lima Catholic church to provide mentors to students referred by teachers. The volunteers in the program must pass a criminal history background check and volunteer orientation prior to working with students. The nature of the mentoring is to provide 1:1 adult attention on a weekly basis to support the child's progress in school. The volunteers do not proselytize to the children and parental consent is required prior to mentors meeting with students. Mentors are a valued part of our Garden Oaks school community!

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## **HOMEWORK**

### **Purpose of Homework**

- To reinforce, enrich, and extend learning by providing a variety of educational opportunities outside the classroom.
- To encourage development of independent study habits, skills and responsibilities.
- To provide additional opportunity for family involvement in the child's education.

### **Teacher Responsibility**

- Assign work that meets the school's homework policy guidelines and is student appropriate
- Give clear, concise directions
- Reinforce previous learning related to the objectives being taught
- Vary assignments and avoid busy work
- Check homework and provide feedback to students
- Provide legible handouts and meaningful assignments

### **Student Responsibility**

- Record, take home and return all assignments
- Make up missed or incomplete work
- Be accurate and neat
- Ask for explanations or clarification if you need it
- Complete assignments in an appropriate place and return on time
- Proofread your own work and check for accuracy
- Do your best
- Have a positive attitude
- Discuss problems or concerns about homework with your teacher

### **Parent Responsibility**

- Make school the number one priority
- Provide an appropriate time and place for homework
- Model a positive attitude
- Indicate an interest about assignments and assist when requested by your child, but allow them to complete their own work
- Be supportive and encouraging
- Communicate and cooperate with your classroom teacher if your child is having difficulties or working longer than the time prescribed
- Request assignments when your child has been absent
- Ensure that children read and choose items from the homework reinforcement list when specific homework assignments are not given (in case of a substitute) or when needing extensions for learning
- Know when to stop a child if he or she is struggling and/or exhausted

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### **Timelines for Homework – per Houston ISD Policy**

In general, homework assignments will be completed for the following day. However, long-range assignments and/or special projects will provide students with an opportunity to develop and refine research skills and the ability to work independently.

Grade Level	Frequency of Assignments	Total Daily Average (all subjects)
PK/K	Daily (5 days a week)	10 minutes + 20 minutes reading**
1	Daily (5 days a week)	20-30 minutes + 20 minutes reading**
2	Daily (5 days a week)	20-30 minutes + 20 minutes reading**
3	Daily (5 days a week)	30-50 minutes + 20 minutes reading**
4	Daily (5 days a week)	50-60 minutes + 20 minutes reading**
5 – 6	Daily (5 days a week)	50-60 minutes + 20 minutes reading**

\*\*Reading is recognized as a universal skill that relates to all subjects. This time period may include parents reading to their child or children reading library books. The school uses the Accelerated Reader program to support student learning. Books from this list will qualify the child to earn “point” for campus recognition programs.

### **Homework Reinforcement and Ideas for Parents**

Homework Reinforcement	PK/K	1	2	3	4	5-6
Practice handwriting and letter formation	•	•	•	•	•	•
Talk with your child to develop oral language skills	•	•	•	•	•	•
Practice math facts		•	•	•	•	•
Practice counting forward and backward	•	•	•			
Compose original math word problems	•	•	•	•	•	•
Practice telling time	•	•	•	•	•	•
Practice estimation and measurement using standard and non-standard units of measurement for weight, capacity and length	•	•	•	•	•	•
Discuss reading selections with your child. Include main idea, characters, predicting setting and sequence	•	•	•	•	•	•
Develop a writer’s notebook for home to include poetry, narratives and letters	•	•	•	•	•	•
Use technology whenever possible to enhance topics taught in class.	•	•	•	•	•	•
Practice self-help skills such as tying shoes, buttoning, using a zipper, packing a lunch, chores, organizational skills and responsibility	•	•	•	•	•	•
Correct and review incorrect answers on previous assignments	•	•	•	•	•	•
Identify, count and exchange money	•	•	•	•	•	•
Practice using various types of maps	•	•	•	•	•	•
Play traditional board games as a family to enhance cooperation, listening skills and following directions	•	•	•	•	•	•

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### NOTICE OF PROGRESS REPORT TO PARENT FORMS

The Notice of Progress – Report to Parents will be sent home during the fourth week of the reporting period or as often as may be necessary. The parent must sign and return the form to indicate the parent has read the report. The teacher may require students to sign for progress reports before they are taken home.

### REPORT CARDS

A report card is issued to the parent or guardian at the end of each nine week grading period for grade K-5. Pre-Kindergarten students receive a report card every twelve weeks. Grades obtained for student performance criteria in the classroom will be the bases for the report card grades. Students enrolled in the Montessori program use an alternate system of student progress reporting which culminates in grades on the final report card. When a student has transferred from one or more schools within the grading period, grades on the checkout sheet or latest report card are considered the basis for report card grades. This year HISD is implementing an online program called GradeSpeed which will allow parent access to their child's grades.

### CAMPUS BEHAVIOR POLICIES

At Garden Oaks Elementary, we are focused on providing an exemplary academic environment for your child. We also believe children should enjoy school. The *Code of Student Conduct* shall serve as the guide for setting expectations for student behavior and the consequences for misbehavior. Parents are expected to review expectations for proper behavior at school on a regular basis with their child. Teachers are expected to assume responsibility for the discipline of students in their individual classrooms. Students will be treated with dignity, respect and patience, however, **persistent misconduct will not be tolerated. Parents will be advised promptly when students begin to have difficulty which might lead to reassignment, suspension or expulsion.** (State Law Section 37.000). The school may prohibit any action which impairs, interferes with or obstructs the educational process or function of the school. It is the responsibility of every student and parent to become familiar with these policies.

#### **Rewards for Appropriate Behavior**

We believe that children must be intrinsically motivated to be responsible self-checking individuals who recognize their role in appropriate school behavior. Teachers may choose to reward students for exceptional displays of citizenship on the campus such as certificates, stickers, pencils, etc. Food items may not be used as a reward.

#### **Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior**

Should an infraction of campus expectations occur, consequences for specific violations are outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. Teachers will use a variety of initial consequences to guide children to make more appropriate choices in the future. These consequences may include but are not limited to time out, peer mediation, Peace Table, removal of recess on a graduated level, removal from extra-curricular activities and field trips. Parent-teacher-student conferences must be held should behaviors persist.

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## Weekly Conduct Grade

All students will receive a weekly conduct grade in their Monday Communication folder. Parents are required to sign the conduct form and return it on Tuesday.

## Removal of Recess

The school reserves the right to remove recess from any student that has not completed class or homework assignments, has not followed classroom or school rules, or has not returned notes or signed materials from the Home Communication folder.

## **FOOD SERVICE POLICIES**

These policies are developed by the Texas Department of Agriculture and enforced by the Texas Education Agency:

- Lunch items may not be bought, traded or sold between students
- Parents are not allowed in the food service line unless they are purchasing food
- Students must make their own food choices
- Parents may not eat off a child's tray
- ALL parents are requested to complete a Free Lunch application whether they qualify for service or not in order that the school be able to verify they have provide this opportunity to access this program
- Food may not be removed from the cafeteria
- Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (candy and junk food) may be served at three school-wide events per year only. No food may be brought in to serve an entire class during the school day except for these days
- Food modifications are made only for health reasons and not for individual or religious preferences

## Birthday Treats

The Texas Department of Agriculture has revised the policy regarding birthday treats at school. Should a parent wish to celebrate a child's birthday, cupcakes or cookies (one per student) are permitted at school. No other items are permitted such as candy, sheet cakes, juice, sodas or fast food items. Items that do not meet these guidelines will not be served and will be sent back home at the end of the day.

To maintain our instructional focus, teachers will allow your child to share cupcakes or cookies with classmates at a time and location determined by the teachers after the students' lunch period and outside the cafeteria. Students in PK and Kindergarten will use their designated snack time for this purpose. Please send the food items to school the morning of the birthday in a sturdy container. Parents are not allowed to interrupt instructional time to drop off items or supervise this activity in class. No party type activities will take place including group photographs, balloons, gifts or party favors.

## Lunch Money Payments

You may leave lunch payments in an envelope in the front office. Parents are strongly encouraged to use the online system of prepayment. **ALL students, regardless of application status, may eat a free breakfast every day. Breakfast is served from 7:15am – 7:45am.**

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### USE OF CELLULAR PHONES, PAGING DEVICES AND ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS

- All cellular phones, paging devices and electronic communication systems must remain in the OFF positions while on the school campus during the instructional day or at school sponsored events.
- All cellular phones, paging devices and electronic communication systems must remain in the student's backpack, purse or locker and may not be worn on their person.

In addition to disciplinary action outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*, the unauthorized operation of such devices will result in confiscation. A \$15 administrative fee payable to HISD will be collected if the device is claimed within 30 days. The principal will notify the parent of the intent to dispose of property left after 30 days. Devices not claimed will be sent to Property Management for disposal.

### TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology in the classroom is an integral part of the instructional process. The entire school campus is wired to the Internet with all work stations connected to a Local Area Network with access to HISD's Wide Area Network. The *Code of Student Conduct* covers violations of security, copywriting, and various other inappropriate uses of technology by students. Students may be denied the right to access a computer connected to the Internet if they violate the acceptable use policy. Parents must sign and return permission forms for students to access the technology on campus.

### TEXTBOOKS and LIBRARY BOOKS

All textbooks are owned by the State of Texas and library books by the school. Lost books must be paid for if lost or stolen. Another book cannot be issued until payment has been made for the lost book. Refunds are given if books are found after payment is made.

### VALUABLES – LOST AND FOUND

Students are asked to leave toys and valuable items at home. *All student items such as backpacks and jackets should be labeled with the student's name in permanent marker.* Jewelry, clothing, stuffed animals, trading cards, dolls and other personal items such as cameras, iPods, MP3 players or hand-held computer games may not be brought, loaned, sold, traded or given away by students at school. A lost and found rack is located in the cafeteria. Unclaimed items are donated to charity at the end of every grading period.

### SPARK PARK

Garden Oaks is very fortunate to have a SPARK Park located on our campus. This area is a collaborative between the school district and the City of Houston. The park is the school playground during school hours and is owned and maintained by HISD. Please help us keep this park clean of all trash and litter. Report any problems you find to us. Dogs are not allowed in the park. The park is available for neighborhood use after school ends each day and on weekends and holidays.

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### **CHECK ACCEPTANCE POLICY**

Checks may be accepted for tuition, fundraisers and school related activities. Tuition payments are due on the first school day of each month. Late payment may jeopardize the child's continuation in the program. Presentation of a personal check will be treated as a good faith effort for payment from the bank. In the event a check is returned marked "insufficient funds", "stop payment", or "account closed" the check will be treated as a presumption to commit theft by deception and the following action will be taken:

- One attempt will be made by telephone to contact the check writer. A three-day period will be given for the individual to present payment in full including all bank charges and processing fees.

Failure to follow this good faith attempt will result in the following actions:

- Check writer will be sent a certified letter indicating a demand for payment in full including all bank charges and processing fees.
- Failure to respond to the conditions of the certified letter within 10 days will result in the filing of a check fraud case with the Harris County District Attorney's Office.
- The school will no longer accept personal checks from individuals that have written a returned check. All future payments must be made by cash or money order.

### **CRIMINAL CODE INFORMATION**

Pursuant to Chapter 62, Article 62.03 and 62.04 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for the State of Texas, effective September 1, 1997, notification is hereby made of our procedures for school notification of registered sex offenders. The official notification is received by the Superintendent of School who then forwards copies to each school. A file is maintained in the office for public inspection of all offender notices received during a school year. The notices are maintained until the end of the current school year. The notice may include any information deemed necessary to protect the public including name, gender, race, date of birth, street name and zip code of an offender's residence, offense, age of the victim and date of registration. Information is available during regular business hours.

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### **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) EAGLE PALS**

Garden Oaks Elementary's Parent Teacher Association is an outstanding organization that supports the efforts of everyone on the school campus. Working together, parents, teachers and school administrators have implemented many programs over the years for the benefit of our children. Membership is renewable each school year and is open to ALL campus parents, relatives, school employees, community members and business leaders. Initiatives include underwriting for the annual 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip to Austin, Fall and Spring Festivals, attendance recognition each month, campus beautification and many other initiatives.

PTA information is located on the bulletin board in the flower bed to the left of the office as you approach coming in from the front. Please check for school-wide events and help support our PTA. The Garden Oaks PTA meets at 6:00 pm on the second Tuesday of most months. Be sure to join the PTA this year! This is a very important part of our school culture.

#### **National PTA Objectives**

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship
- To raise the standards of home life
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as well as secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education

#### **Friends of Montessori – FOM**

Friends of Montessori is a non-profit foundation committed to promoting and supporting Montessori program in public schools. Founded in 1994, FOM is a valued partner in making our Montessori program possible on the campus. Participation in the campus chapter is highly recommended to support your child's Montessori education. FOM information is located on the bulletin board in the flower bed to the left of the office as you approach coming in from the front. Please check for Montessori events and help support our school. The Garden Oaks FOM Chapter meets at 6:00 pm on the fourth Thursday of most months. We are grateful for the ongoing support and dedication of our FOM representatives and families at Garden Oaks Elementary!

To learn more visit [www.fomhouston.org](http://www.fomhouston.org)